

For Immediate Release
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PRESCRIBED FIRE PROGRAM FOR 1998 UNDERWAY AT POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE

The National Park Service at Point Reyes National Seashore initiated its 1998 prescribed fire program yesterday, when 60 acres were burned at Limantour Beach. The goal of the program is to systematically reduce hazardous fuel loads and eliminate some non-native plant species. Due to an unpredictable and sudden change in wind direction, smoke was blown over Inverness Ridge and into nearby communities. Overall, the burn was a complete success and efficiently carried out by Marin County Fire Department, Inverness Volunteer Fire Department, and National Park Service crews.

Additional fires throughout different areas of the National Seashore will be ongoing during the next month. Some of the locations include Muir Woods, Stinson Beach, Mount Vision, and Bolinas Ridge. The main objectives of this fire program are to reduce hazardous fuels and remove non-native vegetation. To complete this prescribed fire program, the National Park Service has developed a specialized fire management team which works in cooperation with Marin County Fire Department.

The prescribed burn is part of a strategic multi-year effort by the National Park Service to reduce hazardous fuel loads and remove invasive, non-native plants such as scotch broom. Because control of non-native plants has been limited in the past, non-native plants have quickly spread and "crowded out" California native plants. In addition, because fire has been suppressed in the

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past, heavy fuel loads have increased and need to be systematically reduced over time to reduce fire danger. Some of the prescribed fires planned this fall, for example the Mount Vision burn, will reduce the fuels between park lands and adjacent private property.

Burning also provides other ecological benefits such as improved wildlife habitat and an improved environment for native plant species.

The prescribed fires will only be conducted if weather and other conditions are favorable. The fire will be monitored and staffed by National Park Service personnel.

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